

Inside the CIA

A top spook comes to Maine

CONSIDERING all the cloak-and-dagger trappings in which the Central Intelligence Agency is wrapped, The Woodlands Club in Falmouth seems an innocent place to get an unlikely one-on-one interview with the No. 2 man at CIA.

The man is Richard J. Kerr, a very unspookish looking spook. He looks like a prosperous, Middle American banker, but he is in charge of worldwide undercover intelligence and spy operations which cost taxpayers an estimated \$30 billion a year. That includes thousands of foreigners and tens of thousands of Americans on hidden payrolls — figures that Kerr flatly refused to talk about.

At 54, Kerr, a father of four, is graying at the temples, wears tortoise-shell glasses for reading, has a trim body 6 feet 3 inches tall and the healthy suntan of a man who exercises regularly outdoors. He was born Oct. 4, 1935, in Fort Smith, Ark., and graduated as a history major from the University of Oregon.

Thirty years ago he was recruited into the CIA and has worked for the spy agency ever since. Kerr has done almost every kind of CIA intelligence work in every part of the globe, from undercover "black operations" to sweet-talking foreign leaders and congressional committees.

SOME OF the "jobs in plain view" Kerr has held include: CIA representative to the commander-in-chief of the Pacific, executive officer of the Intelligence Community Staff, vice chairman of the Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation and director of worldwide intelligence analysis.

President Bush nominated Kerr, the Senate confirmed him and, on March 20, 1989, he was sworn in as deputy director of CIA. Kerr took over the post from Robert M. Gates, whom Bush took to the White House. Earlier, Gates had been deputy to the late, notorious William Casey.

Now, as America's latest No. 2 superspook flew into Maine, he acted like a typical tourist. He ate lobster and went shopping at L.L. Bean — with this difference: He had bodyguards.

Kerr's suave, bankerish look and mannerisms are very good camouflage for a man who has

record, to the World Affairs Council of Maine. When the session was over, two Secret Service agents led me to the room set aside at The Woodlands Club for this interview.

A WORD of explanation is in order about how this unlikely session was arranged. It was incredibly simple. I telephoned James W. Greenleaf, CIA's director of public affairs (I didn't know the CIA had public affairs) and asked him to arrange it. Overnight, Greenleaf did, perhaps largely because Greenleaf is a Maine man, born in South Portland in 1941, and keeps close ties to his Maine roots.

Here is what Kerr had to say about how the White House is now using the CIA very differently from the way it was used under Presidents Reagan and Nixon.

"I have never in 30 years seen any White House so well informed



By
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on intelligence and how to use it, and not use it, as this one. That's partly because President Bush once headed CIA himself," he said.

"But the difference goes far deeper. Many of the senior White House staff have intimate knowledge and understanding of how to use the intelligence as one ingredient in arriving at foreign policy decisions."

Kerr cited the fact that Gates is now deputy national security adviser to Bush; that Defense Secretary Richard Cheney is an old CIA expert from his years as a key member of the Congressional Oversight Committee, the watchdog of CIA operations, and that Gen. Brent Scowcroft, head of the National Security Council, and James Baker, secretary of state, have all had long firsthand experience with the CIA.

removed the director of the CIA, William H. Webster, from Cabinet meetings and also directed that the CIA make its daily briefings directly in person to the president instead of through national security advisers.

These changes, he said, demonstrate the new Bush concept that the CIA should be involved solely with intelligence gathering and not with policy-making. This means that CIA intelligence assessments are not now vetted or tinged to support foreign policy decisions advocated by the National Security Council.

Asked for his assessment of what is happening inside the Soviet Union, especially the drive to independence by Baltic republics, Kerr talked about an aspect seldom spotlighted: the pervasive political power and overwhelming economic, governmental and military strength of the Russian republic. It is bigger and stronger than all other 14 republics combined and a giant compared to each of them individually.

Overall, 143 million people live in the Russian republic. It is the place where Moscow is and the Communist Party, the military and the KGB secret police are centered. Compare that to 1.5 million people in Estonia, 2.5 million in Latvia, 3.6 million in Lithuania.

Russians make up 20 percent of the population in Lithuania, 80 percent in Latvia and 40 percent in Estonia. He suggested this may be one reason Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev is emphasizing that Soviet law requires that that at least two-thirds must vote for secession.

These ethnic Russians living in other Soviet republics not only hold many key government posts, frequently appointed by the Communist Party apparatus in Moscow, but they are also key players in regional party organizations. These are tight-knit groups, because only about 6 percent of the 285 million people in the Soviet Union are party members. Yet the Communist Party runs everything in the Soviet Union.

Kerr said that CIA intelligence operations are changing as East-West military tensions, together with the possibility of surprise attack, lessen and the Bush-Gorbachev summits on nuclear arms reductions bear fruit. However, he said, the need for CIA intelligence remains vital for tracking developments in chemical and biological weapons, which are otherwise extremely difficult to monitor.

He said the CIA continues to make changes in its own way of operating, placing higher priorities on studying and forecasting economic and public opinion changes all over the globe.

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____

MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM

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